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UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL (Only for new nonprovisional applications under 37 C.F.R. § 1.53(b))	Attorney Docket No.	72189/98120B
	First Inventor or Application Identifier	Stacy HAITSIKA
	Title	Data Pass-Through to Sponsors
	Express Mail Label No.	EL389061580US

APPLICATION ELEMENTS See MPEP chapter 600 concerning utility patent application contents.	ADDRESS TO: Assistant Commissioner for Patents Box Patent Application Washington, DC 20231
1. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> * Fee Transmittal Form (e.g., PTO/SB/17) (Submit an original and a duplicate for fee processing)	5. <input type="checkbox"/> Microfiche Computer Program (Appendix)
2. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Specification [Total Pages 53] (preferred arrangement set forth below) - Descriptive title of the Invention - Cross References to Related Applications - Statement Regarding Fed sponsored R & D - Reference to Microfiche Appendix - Background of the Invention - Brief Summary of the Invention - Brief Description of the Drawings (if filed) - Detailed Description - Claim(s) - Abstract of the Disclosure	6. Nucleotide and/or Amino Acid Sequence Submission (if applicable, all necessary) a. <input type="checkbox"/> Computer Readable Copy b. <input type="checkbox"/> Paper Copy (identical to computer copy) c. <input type="checkbox"/> Statement verifying identity of above copies
3. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Drawing(s) (35 U.S.C. 113) [Total Sheets 8]	ACCOMPANYING APPLICATION PARTS
4. Oath or Declaration [Total Pages 4] a. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Newly executed (original or copy) b. <input type="checkbox"/> Copy from a prior application (37 C.F.R. § 1.63(d)) (for continuation/divisional with Box 16 completed) i. <input type="checkbox"/> DELETION OF INVENTOR(S) Signed statement attached deleting inventor(s) named in the prior application, see 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.63(d)(2) and 1.33(b).	7. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Assignment Papers (cover sheet & document(s)) 8. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 37 C.F.R. § 3.73(b) Statement (when there is an assignee) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Power of Attorney 9. <input type="checkbox"/> English Translation Document (if applicable) 10. <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement (IDS)/PTO-1449 <input type="checkbox"/> Copies of IDS Citations 11. <input type="checkbox"/> Preliminary Amendment 12. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Return Receipt Postcard (MPEP 503) (Should be specifically itemized) 13. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> * Small Entity Statement(s) filed in prior application, Status still proper and desired (PTO/SB/09-12) 14. <input type="checkbox"/> Certified Copy of Priority Document(s) (if foreign priority is claimed) 15. <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
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	Arter & Hadden LLP				
Address	Jamboree Center Five Park Plaza, Suite 1000				
City	Irvine	State	CA	Zip Code	92614-8528
Country	USA	Telephone	(949) 252-7500	Fax	(949) 833-9604

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STATEMENT CLAIMING SMALL ENTITY STATUS (37 CFR 1.9(f) & 1.27(c))--SMALL BUSINESS CONCERN		Docket Number (Optional) 72189/98120B
Applicant, Patentee, or Identifier: <u>Stacy Haitsuka, Ronald Burr, Harold MacKenzie, Marwan Zebian, Terry Warren, Shane Blaser, Colin Giffen</u>		
Application or Patent No.: _____		
Filed or Issued: _____		
Title: <u>DATA PASS-THROUGH TO SPONSORS</u>		
I hereby state that I am <input type="checkbox"/> the owner of the small business concern identified below. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> an official of the small business concern empowered to act on behalf of the concern identified below:		
NAME OF SMALL BUSINESS CONCERN <u>NetZero Inc.</u>		
ADDRESS OF SMALL BUSINESS CONCERN <u>2555 Townsgate Road</u> <u>Westlake Village, CA 91361-2650</u>		
I hereby state that the above identified small business concern qualifies as a small business concern as defined in 13 CFR Part 121 for purposes of paying reduced fees to the United States Patent and Trademark Office. Questions related to size standards for a small business concern may be directed to: Small Business Administration, Size Standards Staff, 409 Third Street, SW, Washington, DC 20416.		
I hereby state that rights under contract or law have been conveyed to and remain with the small business concern identified above with regard to the invention described in: <input type="checkbox"/> the specification filed herewith with title as listed above. <input type="checkbox"/> the application identified above. <input type="checkbox"/> the patent identified above.		
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I acknowledge the duty to file, in this application or patent, notification of any change in status resulting in loss of entitlement to small entity status prior to paying, or at the time of paying, the earliest of the issue fee or any maintenance fee due after the date on which status as a small entity is no longer appropriate. (37 CFR 1.28(b))		
NAME OF PERSON SIGNING <u>Stacy Haitsuka</u>		
TITLE OF PERSON IF OTHER THAN OWNER <u>SVP Chief Technology Officer</u>		
ADDRESS OF PERSON SIGNING <u>3835 E. Thousand Oaks Blvd. #338, Westlake Village, CA 91362</u>		
SIGNATURE <u>[Signature]</u> DATE <u>7-27-00</u>		

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Austin
Cleveland
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Dallas
Dayton
Irvine
Los Angeles
Sacramento

Jamboree Center
Five Park Plaza, Suite 1000
Irvine, California 92614-8528

telephone 949.252.7500

facsimile 949.833.9604

San Antonio
San Diego
San Francisco
Washington, D.C.
Woodland Hills
Affiliated Offices
Brussels, Belgium
Geneva, Switzerland

Direct Dial: (949) 252-3129
Email sereboff@arterhadden.com

July 21, 2000

VIA EXPRESS MAIL / Label No. EL389061580US

BOX PATENT APPLICATION
Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

Re: U.S. Utility Patent Application for
DATA PASS-THROUGH TO SPONSORS
Inventors: Stacy Haitsuka, Marwan Zebian, Harold MacKenzie, Ronald Burr,
Terry Warren, Shane Blaser and Colin Giffen
Assignee: NetZero, Inc.
Our Ref.: 72189/98120B

Dear Sir:

Enclosed herewith are the following documents related to the above identified invention:

	<u>Document(s)</u>	<u>Pages/Sheets</u>
1.	Specification, Claims, Abstract and Title Page	53
2.	Drawings (Figures 1 through 8)	8
3.	Declaration and Power of Attorney	4
4.	Statement Claiming Small Entity Status (47 CFR 1.9(f) & 1.27(c)) – Small Business Concern	1
5.	Fee Transmittal for FY2000, Utility Patent Application Transmittal; Patent Application Fee Determination Record	3
	Check in payment of filing fee of \$486.00	1

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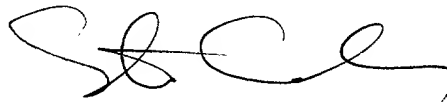
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Page 2

	<u>Document(s)</u>	<u>Pages/Sheets</u>
6.	Assignment; Recordation Form Cover Sheet; Statement of Ownership	6
	Check in payment of recordation fee of \$40.00	1
7.	A return receipt courtesy postcard	

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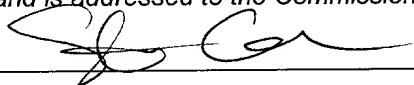
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**APPLICATION FOR
UNITED STATES PATENT
IN THE NAME OF**

**Stacy Haitzuka, Marwan Zebian,
Harold MacKenzie, Ronald Burr, Terry Warren
Shane Blaser & Colin Giffen**

ASSIGNORS TO

NetZero, Inc.

FOR

DATA PASS-THROUGH TO SPONSORS

**Prepared by Steven C. Sereboff, Esq.
Fred C. Hernandez, Esq.**

ARTER & HADDEN LLP

5 Park Plaza, 10th Floor

Irvine, CA 92614-8528

949/252-3129

fax: 949/833-9604

email: sereboff@arterhadden.com

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DATA PASS-THROUGH TO SPONSORS

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10 RELATED APPLICATION INFORMATION

This application is also related to the following applications, each of which is
incorporated herein by reference:

(1) This application is related to Application No. 09/265,512 filed March 9,
1999 entitled "Network Data Distribution Based Upon User-Specific Qualities," which
15 is a continuation-in-part of Application No. 60/077,331 filed March 9, 1998 entitled
"Network Data Distribution Based Upon Geographic Location, Usage Patterns,
Interactive Data, Profile Data, Demographic Data and Scheduling Information;"

(2) Application No. 09/324,747, entitled "Monitoring of Individual Internet
Usage," filed June 3, 1999;

20 (3) Application No. 09/349,325, entitled "System and Device for Monitoring
Individual Internet Usage," filed July 8, 1999;

(4) Application No. 09/364,544, entitled "Device for Displaying Advertisements to a User of an Online Service," filed July 29, 1999;

(5) Application No. 09/348,411, entitled "Independent Internet Client Object with Ad Display Capabilities," filed July 7, 1999;

5 (6) Application No. 60/160,422, entitled "Data Pass Through to Sponsors," filed October 19, 1999, from which priority is claimed; and

(7) Application No. 09/393,391, entitled "Internet Server with Dynamic Ad Targeting Capabilities," filed September 10, 1999.

This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No.
10 60/160,422, filed October 19, 1999, entitled "Data Pass-Through to Sponsors," which is incorporated herein by reference.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. *Field Of The Invention*

The present invention relates to passing information in conjunction with resource requests in a data network.

5 2. *Description Of Related Art*

Online services today offer a variety of services to their users. Users may access news, weather, financial, sports, and entertainment services, participate in and retrieve information from online discussion groups, and send and receive email. A user of an online service typically accesses the service using specialized communication software
10 (i.e., client application or client software) that establishes and manages a connection from the user's computer (or client) to the online service provider's host computers (or servers) and facilitates the user's interactions with the service.

In addition to managing the connection, there is provided software to display pages or screens relating to retrieved content according to views or presentations
15 specific to the online service. This software may be integrated with the client application. The functionality of the content and the user interface (i.e., icons, dialog boxes, menus, etc.) for interacting with the content are typically dictated by various standards.

Interactions between the user's computer and the online service are facilitated by
20 a variety of software protocols (i.e., communication conventions, rules and structures),

including application level protocols, for managing the transfer of data across the network and to the client application on the user's computer. A protocol may be proprietary or exclusive to an online service such that only client software from the online service provider may be used to communicate with the server software. For example, an online service provider that supports electronic mail, discussion groups, chat groups, news services, etc. may define and use specific protocols for each type of service so that appropriate information is exchanged between the participants (i.e., clients and servers). Each application-specific protocol may be based on a common, underlying protocol.

10 The Internet and World Wide Web ("Web"), comprised of a vast array of international computer networks, many provide online service users with considerable information resources and other content. Typically, this content is accessed using a web browser, such as Microsoft Internet Explorer or Netscape Navigator, capable of understanding the HyperText Markup Language (HTML) used to create the documents found on the Web and the HyperText Transfer Protocol (HTTP) used to navigate the Web. Email and Usenet discussion groups are typically accessed through companion software to the browser. Although web browsers typically have varying levels of functionality or sophistication, retrieved content is displayed in content pages according to views or presentations specific to the web document currently presented by the web browser. Typically, the views and presentations are different than those provided by the communication software from the online service provider because the web browser is,

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in fact, a separate client application displaying web documents containing presentation directives.

When using a browser, the browser issues HTTP messages to request web pages. A requested web page is typically identified using its URL – uniform resource locator. The URL is a reference (or address) to a resource available on a TCP/IP network such as the Internet. A URL is composed of a character string, and may have a number of parts. These parts include a top level domain name, second level domain name, directory name, and file name. URLs may identify a file located on a web server. URLs may also point to other resources on the network such as database queries and command output. The determination and use of URLs is well known in the art and is not discussed further herein. There are two typical techniques of providing content from a web server which is customized to a user.

In one technique, the user enters information into a form on a web page, clicks on a button on the web page, and the entered information is sent to the web server as part of an HTTP message. This technique requires the user to manually identify himself or manually provide custom information. Thus, the user must enter his information each time he would like a customized web page.

A second technique utilizes cookies. A cookie is information that a web server puts on a user's hard disk so that the web server can remember something about the user at a later time. More technically, it is information for future use that is stored by the server on the client side of a client/server communication. Typically, a cookie records a

user's preferences when using a particular web site. Using the HTTP, each request for a web page is independent of all other requests. For this reason, web servers have no memory of what pages they have sent to a user previously or anything about a user's previous visits. A cookie is a mechanism that allows the server to store its own
5 information about a user on the user's own computer. Cookies are commonly used to rotate the banner ads that a site sends so that it does not duplicate ad transmissions on a succession of requested pages. Cookies can also be used by a web server to customize pages for a user based on the user's browser type or other information the user might have provided the web server. Cookies are computer-specific, not user-specific. Each
10 computer has a different set of cookies, and web servers generally cannot recognize that the same user has used two different computers. Furthermore, unless a user has provided user-specific information to a web server, the web server's cookie will not have any user-specific information.

In some portions of this disclosure, the term "resource locator" is used. The
15 term is defined as a string or code which uniquely identifies a resource on a network. Thus, the URL is a species of resource locator.

There are a number of types of online service providers that administer the provision of online services to users. Online services may serve the general public or may serve a limited class of individuals. Some public OSPs utilize proprietary
20 networks; America Online and @Home are examples. Other public OSPs use the public networks, and most Internet Service Providers (ISPs) are an example. OSPs

often provide Internet access. Internet access is the primary service provided by some OSPs, most notably ISPs.

Users typically connect to an OSP using a computer with a communications device such as an analog modem, an Ethernet adapter, DSL adapter or cable modem. Such connections may be analog or digital, dial-up or constantly-connected. Subscribers typically pay a fee for their subscriptions to OSPs. These fees typically are in the form of a sign-up fee, plus online charges which are fixed (i.e., unlimited monthly access for a fixed fee) or based upon the amount of time the user is connected to the online service. The fees generally increase with bandwidth.

Some online service providers have derived revenue by displaying advertisements for third parties (hereinafter, "advertisements") to users. For example, when a user accesses a web page on the Web, an advertisement may be displayed to the user as part of the web page. Advertisements are also shown to users of some proprietary online services. Typically in such systems, each user accessing a certain screen or site is shown the same advertisement. Sophisticated systems have the capability to change the advertisement after a certain period of time.

Some attempts have been made to provide advertising-supported online services, including Internet access, on a free or heavily discounted basis. Typically, these online services required the user to use a special client application for connecting to the online service. The client application typically causes an advertising window to be displayed on the user's display. This advertising window remains visible and on top of other

windows throughout the entire online session. The client application receives advertisements from the online service provider, and the client application displays the advertisements in the advertising window. It is unknown to the inventors, however, whether the transmission of advertisements from the online service provider to the client application is initiated by the online service provider or the client application, how the online service determines which advertisements to send to the users, and whether such typical client applications do anything more than open the communications link with the online service and display advertisements.

In one advertising based Internet service called Bigger.net, the client application periodically requested new advertisements from an ad server. A host computer monitored the time between such requests and terminated the connection if a preset period of time was exceeded. Bigger.net also had the ability to monitor network activity, though it is unclear how this was done.

Other advertising-supported online services have included: CyberFreeway, which used a client application developed by HyperNet, Inc. of Tokyo, Japan; Juno Online, which provided free email; Tritium and Freewwwweb.

Advertisers find it desirable to target advertisements to relevant potential customers. For example, an advertiser of stockings would prefer to target women rather than men with its advertising. A Boston restaurant would prefer to target residents of Boston and business travelers rather than children living in San Francisco. Moreover, advertisers prefer to pay for advertising based upon the number of relevant consumers

who are actually exposed to the advertisement. For typical online systems and networks, including the Web, it is often difficult for an advertiser to precisely determine whether its advertisements were actually viewed by a user and for how long, and whether the advertisement induced a response. Accordingly, there exists a need for a
5 targeted advertisement system that also can provide information as to the characteristics of those who were exposed to each advertisement, for how long the user was exposed, and at what times.

It is believed that the prior art advertising-supported online services did not have the ability to target advertisements. Furthermore, their client applications are believed
10 to have been limited in capabilities.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In accordance with one aspect of the present invention, there is provided a client application for enabling access to an online service and displaying advertisements while the user has access to the online service. The client application receives play lists from the online service provider. The play lists include information about advertisements to be played and the order of play. The client application displays advertisements in a client window continuously while the user has access to the online service. When a user clicks on an advertisement, the client application causes a resource associated with the advertisement to be loaded by a browser application.

In another aspect of the invention, an online server obtains descriptive information related to the user, such as the user's age, gender, address, interests, marriage status, income, and occupation. The client application monitors the user's click-throughs of advertisements. Whenever a user clicks-through on an advertisement, the client application initiates a process whereby the user-related information is passed to the advertisement's sponsor. The sponsor then utilizes the user-related information to select an electronic presentation for the user that is related to the advertisement. In one embodiment, the process occurs in real time. The online server processes the user information and identifies one or more resources that are accessed to provide the user with an electronic presentation related to the advertisement. In another embodiment, the user-related information is stored in a data store for the sponsor. The sponsor can then

analyze the data over time and modify or enhance one or more electronic presentations associated with the advertisement.

Still further objects and advantages attaching to the system and to its use and operation will be apparent to those skilled in the art from the following particular
5 description.

72189/98120B

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Further objects of this invention, together with additional features contributing thereto and advantages accruing therefrom, will be apparent from the following description of a preferred embodiment of the present invention which is shown in the accompanying drawings with like reference numerals indicating corresponding parts throughout and which is to be read in conjunction with the following drawings, wherein:

Figure 1 is a first block diagram of a network data distribution system in accordance with the invention.

Figure 2 is a second block diagram of a network data distribution system in accordance with the present invention.

Figure 3 is a representation of a display of a local device having a client window and a browser window.

Figure 4 is a flow chart of a method of monitoring web browsing by a user in accordance with the invention.

Figure 5 is a flow chart of a method of displaying advertisements to a user of an online service in accordance with the invention.

Figure 6 is a flow chart of a method of using user-related information to provide a user with information related to a clicked-through advertisement.

Figure 7 is a flow chart of a method of recording user-related data when the user clicks-through on an advertisement in accordance with the invention.

Figure 8 is a flow chart of a method of storing user-related data for an advertisement sponsor when the user clicks-through on an advertisement in accordance
5 with the invention.

These and additional embodiments of the invention may now be better understood by turning to the following detailed description wherein an illustrated embodiment is described.

Figure 7 is a flow chart of a method of recording user-related data when the user clicks-through on an advertisement in accordance with the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Throughout this description, the preferred embodiment and examples shown should be considered as exemplars, rather than limitations on the apparatus and methods of the present invention.

5 The System of the Invention

The system of the invention enables data, such as advertisements, to be sent to users based upon: the user's geographic location; the user's interactive data; the user's network usage data; the user's personal profile information; the scheduling requirements of the data to be sent; and the demographic requirements of the data to be sent.

10 Referring now to Figure 1, there is shown a block diagram of a network data distribution system in accordance with the invention in conjunction with a source of web pages. Figure 1 includes a local device 100, a data access network 120, an OSP server 130 and a web server 150. The local device 100, the data access network 120 and the OSP server 130 comprise the network data distribution system. The local device
15 100 is provided online service to the network data distribution system under control of the OSP server 130. An online service provider controls the OSP server 130.

The local device 100 preferably comprises a client computer which is configured to access the OSP server 130 via the local access network 120. The client computer may be, for example, a PC running a Microsoft Windows operating system. The local
20 device 100 preferably includes an output device, such as display 101, and an input

device, such as keyboard 102 and / or pointing device 103 (e.g., mouse, track ball, light pen, or data glove). The local device 100 may also be, for example, an Internet appliance, network computer (NC), or an appropriately Internet-enabled device such as a portable digital assistant (PDA), mobile phone, refrigerator, etc. The particular type of
5 device of the local device 100 is not considered to be important so long as the local device 100 can provide some measure of individual user interactivity with an online service.

The data access network 120 provides lower layer network support for the local device 100 to interact with online service, including the OSP server 130 and the web
10 server 150. The data access network 120 preferably comprises a common or private bi-directional telecommunications network (e.g., a public switched telephone network (PSTN), a cable-based telecommunication network, a LAN, a WAN, a wireless network), coupled with or overlaid by a TCP/IP network (e.g., the Internet or an intranet).

15 The web server 150 may be of the type known in the art and has the ability to serve web pages to the local device 100, as requested in the manner known in the art. It should be appreciated that the web server 150 is representative of any source of web pages available to the local device 100. Thus, for example, the web server 150 could be accessible from the Internet, or it could be a part of an intranet and represents any
20 number of web servers.

The OSP server 130 preferably is a computer system, such as a server computer. Alternatively, the OSP server 130 may be considered to represent a number of physical devices which as a group provide the indicated network services. The OSP server 130 acts as a recipient of certain information transmitted by the local device 100, as
5 described further below. The OSP server 130 preferably also transmits certain data to the local device 100 as described further below.

Referring now to Figure 2, there is shown a block diagram of a network data distribution system of an online service in accordance with the present invention. The system comprises a client application 110, the data access network 120, the OSP server
10 130 and one or more data stores 140, which are referred to collectively using the reference numeral 140 and individually using the suffix a, b, c, d, e, f, or, g .

A browser application 160 is also shown. A "browser application" is software which provides interactive utilization of hypertext objects located on a network, such as web pages on the Internet. As used herein, "browser application" also includes most
15 email clients and ftp clients. The client application 110 is a program operative on local device 100, and preferably an independent application program or a DLL. The client application 110 preferably retrieves certain network data, displays certain network data, transmits geographic location data, transmits interactive user data, transmits network usage data and transmits personal profile information as described below. The client
20 application 110 preferably also sets up and provides access to the online service. The data stores 140 store and provide this geographic information data 140d, network usage data 140a, interactive usage data 140b, personal profile information 140g, data to be

sent 140e, schedule for transmitting data 140f and demographics for transmitting data 140c. Additional data stores 140 may be provided to store any of a wide variety of information related to the online service.

The browser application 160, such as Microsoft Internet Explorer or Netscape Navigator is preferably installed on the local device 100. When the local device 100 is connected to the web server 150 through the data access network 120, the user of the local device browses the web server 150 from the local device 100 using the browser application. The browser application itself need not be stored on the local device 100. The important aspect is that the user, from the local device 100, can exercise control over what web pages are requested and thus displayed by the local device 100.

Each time a user uses the local device 100 to connect to the online service, the client application 110 and the OSP server 130 establish a session. In this session, the client application 110 transmits certain information regarding the user of the local device 100 and his use of the local device 100 while connected to the online service. The OSP server 130, on the other hand, uses the information from the client application 100 to determine information which should be sent to the client application 110. Preferably, the information from the client application 110 is used by the OSP server 130 to select advertisements which the local device 100 should display. The client application 110 then causes these advertisements to be displayed on the local device's display 101.

The information from the client application 110 regarding the user preferably includes geographic data and personal profile information. Geographic data indicating the user's current location preferably is sent from the client application 110 to the OSP server 130, which then stores the geographic data in the data store 140d. This
5 geographic data can be something simple, like a phone number. The user preferably provides personal profile information on a periodic basis which is stored in the data store 140g and used by the OSP server 130. Personal profile information is defined as any information that describes the user. This information includes (but is not limited to) geographic location information, psychological information, hobbies, interests,
10 education level, income level, gender, age, marriage status, home address and personal interests.

The information regarding the user's use of the local device 100 includes email usage, web usage and advertisement click-throughs. The user's interactions and feedback with the web server 150 provided through the browser application 160 are
15 preferably captured by the client application 110, analyzed by the OSP server 130 and stored in the data store 140b. This includes the user's feedback and responses to the data delivered to the browser application 160. The user's activities on the web server 150 provided through the browser application 160 are preferably captured by the client application 110, analyzed by the OSP server 130 and stored in the data store 140a. This
20 includes the type of network data the user requests and accesses. This data is preferably summarized and classified into multiple demographic profiles.

The data to be sent to users preferably has scheduling requirements that dictate when it should be sent. These scheduling requirements include (but are not limited to): frequency, maximum number of times to send to an individual, minimum number of times to send to an individual, time of day to send, and first and last days to send. The data to be sent to users can have demographic requirements that dictate to whom it should be sent. These include (but are not limited to): personal profile, interactive data, network usage information and geographic location.

Referring now to Figure 3, there is shown the display 101 having a client window 200 and a browser window 300. The client window 200 is generated and controlled by the client application 110. The browser window is generated and controlled by the browser application 160, here Microsoft Internet Explorer. The browser window 300 is familiar to those skilled in the art, so the particulars are not described further herein. Further information regarding the use of most browser applications and their technical specifications is abundantly available.

The client window 200 includes a title bar 230, an advertising pane 210, a number of operational icons 205, 215, 220, 240, 250 on the title bar 230, and a number of button bar icons 260, 265, 270, 275 on a button bar 280. The title bar 230 preferably identifies the name of the OSP. The advertising pane 210 is a space in which the client application 110 may cause advertisements to be displayed. The client application may also be able to cause advertisements to be displayed in other windows, such as browser window 310.

The button bar icons 260, 265, 270, 275 preferably provide one-click access to Web pages and / or menus that might be useful to the user. The online service provider can sell the button bar icons to third parties as an additional revenue source. These icons 260, 265, 270, 275 are associated with particular URLs. The icon 260 is associated with a start page. The icon 265 is associated with an online shopping mall page. The icon 270 is associated with an online technical support page from the online service provider. The icon 275 is associated with an online search engine page. By clicking on any of these icons 260, 265, 270, 275, the client application 110 causes the browser application 160 to load the Web page having the URL associated with the selected icon.

The operational icons 205, 215, 240, 250, 280 on the title bar 230 preferably provide one-click access to operational features of the client application 110. As explained below, the client application 110 maintains records of the advertisements which have been displayed. The cycle back icon 205 allows the user to review advertisements which were previously displayed by the client application 110, in the reverse order in which the advertisements were displayed. If the user has cycled back through advertisements, the cycle forward icon 215 allows the user to review advertisements in the order in which the advertisements were displayed by the client application 110. The search icon 240 provides convenient access to online searching facilities. The close icon 250 causes the client window 200 to close, and thus also causes the session with the online service to terminate.

The menu icon 280 provides access to a menu of additional menu items and functions. The menu preferably provides alternative and enhanced access to the features associated with the button bar icons 260, 265, 270, 275 and the other operational icons 205, 215, 240, 250. In addition, the menu preferably provides the user with the ability to hide or show the title bar 230 and / or the button bar 280. The menu preferably also allows the user to access and edit his profile. The menu preferably provides the user with the option of positioning the client window 200 at any of a number of predefined positions, such as top left corner of the display 101, top right corner, bottom left corner, or bottom right corner.

10 The browser window 300 includes a display pane 310, an address bar 320 and a title bar 330. The display pane 310 is a region of the browser window 300 wherein the browser application causes web pages received by the browser application to be displayed. The address bar 320 is another region of the browser window 300 and the browser application displays URLs in the address bar 320 corresponding to the web page currently displayed in the display pane 310. The user can also enter a URL into the address bar 320, and the browser application will attempt to load the web page or other object to which the entered URL points. The primary feature of the title bar 330 is that it displays the title of the browser application. Another feature of most browsers is that the title bar 330 displays the title of the web page then displayed in the display pane 15 310.

20 310.

The client window 200 is displayed on top of the browser window 300. In some embodiments, the client window 200 remains visible and on top of all other windows so

long as the communication channel to the OSP server 130 is open. The client application 110 can control the location of the client window 200 on the display 101. For example, the client application 110 may allow the user to select one of several predefined locations for the client window 200, such as lower left corner, upper right corner, etc. Some operating systems such as Microsoft Windows permit windows to be moved to the edge of the display 101 so that only a small portion of the window is visible. The client application 110 may be empowered to prevent the client window 200 from being moved off of the visible area of the display 101. When the user attempts to hide all or a part of the client window 200, the client window preferably moves the client window 200 to a fully visible area of the display 101.

The Methods of the Invention

Referring now to Figure 4, there is shown a flow chart of a method of distributing data in a network in accordance with the invention. The components 110, 120, 130, 140 work together to deliver data that meets the geographic and demographic criteria.

After the method begins (step 405), the user preferably uses the client application 110 to connect to the data access network 120, and then the OSP server 130 (step 410). The particular manner of the connection depends on the network infrastructure underlying the connections. The important aspect of this step 410 is that a communications channel is established between the client application 110 and the OSP server 130. By "communications channel," it is meant a logical path for data

transmission. A logical data path or logical data link is defined as a communication path between two terminals across which data may be transmitted. The OSP server 130 preferably acts as a gatekeeper to the online services. Only after the OSP server 130 has authorized access can the local device 100 access the web server 150 and the other
5 resources of the online service.

The communication channel may be of two varieties – dial-up or constant-connection. In a dial-up communication channel, the connection to the online service becomes available only after the local device 100 creates a physical link to the online network via a PSTN and then a logical link to the online network. For example, the
10 local device 100 has a dial-up communication channel if the local device 100 has a modem and connects through tone dialing to the online service using the PSTN. In a constant-connection communication channel, the connection to the online service is always available to the local device 100, and the local device need only access a logical link to the online network. For example, the local device 100 has a constant-connection
15 communication channel when the local device 100 has a cable modem and connects to the online service using a cable service. Digital subscriber lines (DSL), integrated services digital networks (ISDN), and fixed wireless connections are other examples of constant-connection communication channels.

If this is the first time the user has connected (step 415), then the OSP server 130
20 preferably requires the user to use the local device 100 to submit personal profile

information (step 420). Preferably, the OSP server 130 periodically will request (step 425) that the client application 110 have the user update this profile (step 430).

5 The personal profile information is preferably maintained by the OSP server 130 within a user information record, referred to as a User Record, comprising a file that is stored in one of the data stores 140. The User Record preferably contains a plurality of data fields that each correspond to some informational aspect or demographic category associated with the user. A demographic category means any type of informational category this is used to define the user. In one embodiment, the User Record includes data fields that are associated with at least each of the following demographic categories
10 for the user: name, age, gender, street address, state, country, zip code, income, occupation, education level, marital status, hobbies, and family size. The demographic categories may also relate to other user interests, such as sports interests and musical interests.

Each time the local device 100 connects to the OSP server 130, the OSP server
15 130 preferably obtains data indicating the local device's current geographic location (step 435). In the case of a dial-up connection, this geographic information is preferably derived from a local access phone number used by the client application 110 to connect to the data access network 120, and the client application 110 transmits its local access phone number to the OSP server 130 for geographic determination purposes.

20 Once connected, a number of processes are preferably started (step 440). In one of these processes, whenever the user interacts with data received on the client

application 110, the client application 110 sends feedback information respecting this interaction to the OSP server 130. The OSP server 130 then summarizes and classifies the feedback information into demographic profiles stored in the data store 140.

In another of these processes, whenever a user uses the browser application 160
5 to request or access data from the web server 150, the client application 110 sends feedback information respecting these requests and data accesses to the OSP server 130. The OSP server 130 then summarizes and classifies this feedback information into the demographic profiles in the data store 140.

In another of these processes, while a user's local device 100 is connected to the
10 web server 150, the OSP server 130 determines which targeted data needs to be sent to the client application 110 and then transmits this targeted data to the client application 110. The OSP server 130 accomplishes this by:

examining the scheduling requirements to determine which data needs to be
sent;

15 examining the demographic requirements of the data to determine to which
demographic profiles the data needs to be sent;

selecting the users who are currently connected that meet the demographic
requirements of the data; and

sending the data to the selected users.

As mentioned, one of the processes relates to the display of data, and particularly advertisements, in the client window 200. Methods of displaying advertisements to a user of an online services are described next.

Referring now to Figure 5, there is shown a flow chart of a method of displaying
5 advertisements to a user of an online service in accordance with the invention. This method generally involves the display of advertisements during a logon process and then also during usage of the online service.

After the method begins (step 505), the client application is activated (step 510). The client application 110 may be installed during manufacture of the local device 100,
10 during use of the local device 100 at the instigation of the user, or may occur automatically as a consequence of other processes. Furthermore, the client application 110 may be activated either manually or automatically. Although at least some aspects of the client application 110 should be operable from the local device 100, the client application 110 need not be stored on the local device 100 and can be run from a remote
15 location.

After the client application 110 is activated, the client application 110 may display the client window 200 on the display 101 (step 515). In the next step (step 520), the client application 110 may display one or more advertisements in a window such as in the ad pane 210 of the ad window 200. In the case of dial-up and constant-
20 connection communication channels, the communication channel to the online service might not yet be established or fully open at this point. Thus, the client application 110

cannot obtain the advertisements from the online service. Instead, the client application 110 obtains the advertisements locally. For example, during installation of the client application 110 one or more advertisements are installed on the local device 100 for display outside of a session. Alternatively, the advertisements may be downloaded to
5 the local device at the beginning of a session, during a session, or as part of the termination of a session.

Where it is not desired to display advertisements prior to full establishment of the communication channel, then it is preferred also that the ad pane 210 not be displayed. In such embodiments, it might be desirable to provide a different
10 configuration of the client window 200 than that shown in Figure 3. For example, the client window 200 might show the status of the connection process.

The client application 110 preferably includes an ad display process which is responsible for displaying sponsored advertisements a window such as in the ad pane 210 of the client window 200. A sponsored advertisement comprises an advertisement
15 that an online service provider displays in the client window 200 on behalf of a sponsor. The ad display process preferably operates in accordance with a play list. The play list comprises one or more ad objects. The ad objects may be, for example, data constructs which each include a resource locator of an advertisement to be displayed, a resource locator to be accessed if the user clicks on (or otherwise selects) the advertisement when
20 displayed in the ad pane 210, and a number of attributes for the display of the advertisement. The display attributes may be one or more of, for example: fade, wash, sweep, fly, blinds, box, checkerboard, crawl, dissolve, peak, spiral, split, stretch, strips,

swivel, wipe, zoom. These types of display attributes are well known (though not necessarily with respect to online services) and are therefore not described further herein. The ad objects preferably also specify how long the advertisement should be displayed. Other display attributes are within the scope of the invention. The play list
5 preferably specifies an order in which the advertisements identified in the play list are to be displayed. As an alternative to displaying advertisements in accordance with a play list, the client application is preferably also configured to display advertisements on an individual basis apart from the play list.

As mentioned, each advertisement is associated with an advertisement sponsor.
10 Each ad object preferably includes a sponsor identifier code that is used to identify the sponsor that is associated with the advertisement.

Typically, advertisements in the online industry are associated with a resource locator, and more typically with a URL. As is well known, when a user uses an input device, such as the pointing device 103, to click or otherwise select on an online
15 advertisement in a browser's window such as browser window 300, the browser application loads the resource at the associated URL. This is commonly known as "click-through." In accordance with the invention, if during the display of an advertisement, the user clicks-through on the advertisement, then the client application 110 causes the resource locator associated with the advertisement to be loaded by the
20 browser application 160. If the browser application 160 is not open at the time, then the browser application is first opened and then pointed to the resource locator associated with the advertisement. If the resource locator is not for a web page, the client

application 110 or some other software in the local device 100 preferably causes the appropriate application to open so that the resource locator may be opened.

Preferably, the client application 110 displays advertisements from the time that the client application 110 is activated. To accomplish this, the client application 110 preferably is provided with a logon play list for use before the communication channel with the OSP server 130 is open. The client application 110 preferably is also provided with the advertisements referenced in the logon play list. The logon play list is preferably stored on the local device 100 during installation of the client application 110. Subsequently, during each session with the online service, the OSP server 130 provides a new logon play list and the advertisements referenced by the new logon play list to the client application 110 for use by the client application 110 during the next logon. The OSP server 130 can transmit the new logon play list in any of several ways, such as part of establishment of the communication channel to the OSP server 130, during the user's session with the online service, or as part of the closing of the communication channel. The latter is preferred, since it proves the online service provider with the best targeting control.

It should also be appreciated that, where there is a constant-connection communication link, a logon play list can be communicated from the OSP server 130 to the client application 110 at any time. Similarly, in some dial-up environments, such as ISDN, a logon play list can be communicated from the OSP server 130 to the client application 110 at any time using signaling channels or other off-line means.

In the next step (step 525), the client application 110 establishes a communication channel to the online service. With the communication channel established, the client application 110 can now receive a new play list from the OSP server 130 (step 530). This online play list can reference advertisements which are in the data access network 120. In some embodiments, it may be desirable for the OSP server 130 to transmit additional or replacement play lists and / or ad objects to the client application 110.

The client application 110 preferably also receives from the OSP server 130 a match list. The match list comprises one or more match objects. The match objects each comprise an activity identifier and an ad object. The match list guides the client application 110 to display certain advertisements notwithstanding the play list. The activity identifier preferably comprises resource locators and keywords which are used for targeting advertising to the user. The activity identifier may also be an object which altogether describes an online activity in which the user may become involved, such as email or chat.

During the user's session with the online service, the client application 110 preferably monitors the user's interaction with the data access network 120. If the user's interaction with the network matches one of the activity identifiers in the match list, then the ad display process displays the advertisement of the ad object corresponding to the matched activity identifier. Methods for monitoring the online activities of an online user are described in the related application referenced above.

The client application then displays advertisements in accordance with the on-line play list and the match list (step 535), and this continues while the user uses the online service (step 540).

As an example of the use of the match list, if the user points his browser application 160 to a Web site which the online service provider has previously identified to relate to sale of automobiles, then the online service provider preferably would run an advertisement targeting a potential purchaser of an automobile. The Web site may be identified from its URL, and if the URL is an activity identifier in the match list, the client application 110 can cause the appropriate advertisement to be displayed.

As another example, the user might go to a search engine which is known to the online service provider, and search for information about the sale of automobiles based upon the keywords "automobile sales." The client application 110 preferably checks if the keywords sent to these selected search engines are activity identifiers in the match list. If so, then the client application 110 preferably displays the appropriate advertisement.

At some point, the user's online session will end. To manually close the session, the user can select icon 250 in the client window 200 (Figure 2). The client application 110 preferably provides the user with the opportunity to confirm the closing of the session (step 545). If the user cancels closure, then the method continues at step 535. If the user confirms closure, then the client application 110 closes the communication channel to the online service (step 550), and the method ends (step 555).

In addition to manual closure, the client application 110 preferably can automatically close the communication channel. In the case of a dial-up connection, the client application 110 preferably can detect inaction by the user. This inaction may be with respect to the data access network 120, or more preferably, with respect to the client application 110. If the user has been inactive for a predetermined period of time, then the client application 110 preferably displays a dialog on the display 101 in which the user is given some period of time to request that the session be continued.

In the case of a constant-connection communication channel, the client application 110 preferably monitors the user's activity with the local device 100 with respect to the online service and thereby detects whether the user is interacting with the online service. Like a screen saver in reverse, the client application 110 detects some period of inactivity and causes the client window 200 to be closed. Alternatively, the client window 200 could remain on the display even when the user's session is terminated, but the client application 110 would allow other windows to be displayed on top of the client window 200. If the user desired to open a session with the online service, the client window 200 would again have to be on top of all other windows, either through automatic or manual means.

As can be seen, this process permits browsing by the user and displaying of advertisements by the client application 100 without interfering with the user's use of the browser application.

In addition to the display of advertisements in the client window 200, the client application 110 preferably monitors the user's click-throughs of advertisements and initiates a process whereby user-related information is passed to an advertisement's sponsor whenever the user clicks-through on the advertisement. The sponsor then
5 utilizes the user-related information to provide the user with an electronic presentation, such as an audio/visual display, that is associated with the advertisement. The electronic presentation preferably comprises at least one web page that is displayed in the browser window 300. The electronic presentation preferably also comprises other visual mediums, such as a window or animated file that opens on the display 101 when
10 the user clicks on an advertisement in the client window 200. One or more audio files are also preferably executed in conjunction with the presentation.

Figure 6 shows a flow chart that describes a process whereby a sponsor receives user information and defines in real time the parameters an electronic presentation based upon the user information. The process begins when the user commences an online
15 session (step 605). In the case of a dial-up connection, an online session commences when the client application 110 establishes a communication channel via a PSTN from the local device 100 to the OSP server 130. The online session terminates when the communication channel is closed, or when the client application "hangs up" the connection.

20 In a constant-connection communication channel, the client application 110 does not actually create or terminate the communication channel, which is always on. Thus, for a constant connection, establishment of a communication channel preferably

comprises the client application 110 transmitting a request to the OSP server 130 to authorize the local device 100 to interact with the web server 150. When activated, the client application preferably automatically transmits such a request. The online session commences when the OSP server 130 provides such authorization. The online session
5 terminates when the OSP server 130 removes such authorization, preferably at the request of the user through the client application 110.

In step 615, the client application 110 causes advertisements to be displayed in the client window 200 on the display 101. The client application 110 preferably displays the advertisements in accordance with a play list, as described above with
10 respect to Figure 5. In another embodiment, the client application 110 displays advertisements apart from the play list. The client application 110 preferably continually displays advertisements in the client window 200 while the communication channel remains open.

At some point during the online session, the user clicks on or otherwise selects a
15 sponsored advertisement in the client window 200 (step 620). The client application 110 then automatically transmits a notification signal to the OSP server 130 that notifies the OSP server 130 that the user clicked on the advertisement (step 625). The notification signal preferably includes an advertisement identification code that the OSP server 130 uses to identify the advertisement on which the user clicked. The
20 notification signal also includes a user identification code that identifies the user that clicked on the advertisement.

Upon receiving the notification signal, the OSP server 130 uses the user identification code to access the user's User Record. The OSP server 130 then forwards at least a portion of the user-related information in the User Record to the advertisement's sponsor (step 630). This may be done by encoding the data in a URL.

5 The sponsor then preferably uses the user-related information to define the attributes of an electronic presentation for the user that is related to the advertisement (step 635).

In one embodiment, passing the user-related information to the sponsor comprises the OSP server 130 invoking a sponsor-defined selection protocol for selecting a customized format or environment for the electronic presentation according
10 to the user information. The selection protocol comprises a set of coded rules that are used to identify one or more resource locators that are accessed in accordance with the presentation. The resource locators preferably specify the electronic location of data related to one or more web pages, an audio file, a visual file such as video or animation file, or any other electronic resource that may be used to present information associated
15 with the advertisement. Preferably, the sponsor defines a unique selection protocol for each advertisement.

In one embodiment, the OSP server 130 searches through the entries in the data fields of the User Record. Based upon the particular entries in the user's User Record, the OSP server identifies the set of resource locators that will be accessed during the
20 electronic presentation. If any of the entries in the User Record match a predefined criteria, then the OSP server 130 automatically identifies a corresponding resource

locator. The sponsor preferably defines the selection protocol so that the selected resource locators are particularly targeted toward the user.

For example, if the "age" field in the User Record indicates that the user is a teenager, the selected resource locators preferably identify the location of audio and visual files that are selected to catch a teenager's attention. Another resource locator preferably specifies the location of a web site that is particularly targeted toward teenagers. The OSP server 130 preferably also identifies resource locators that define the location of data related to the attributes of the web site, such as colors, fonts, font sizes, and links that are displayed. Thus, the format of the web site is defined in real time based upon an examination of the user information. This increases the likelihood of the electronic presentation being particularly interesting for the user that clicked on the advertisement to thereby enhance the user's online experience.

After the OSP server 130 identifies the resource locators, the OSP server 130 transmits a signal to the client application 110 instructing the client application 110 to initiate the electronic presentation (step 640). The signal preferably includes one or more codes that identify the resource locators that are accessed in accordance with the presentation.

In step 645, the client application 110 initiates the electronic presentation. The client application 110 preferably causes the local device to access the resources associated with the identified resource locators. For example, the client application 110 causes the browser application 150 to display one or more web pages identified by one

of the resource locators. The client application 110 also accesses any other resources that are located on the network 120, such as audio and/or visual files. The resources can be located locally on the local device 100, on the OSP server 130, or anywhere on the network 120. When each of the resources are accessed, the user is provided with a
5 customized electronic presentation related to the clicked-on advertisement.

In addition to passing user-related information to the sponsor in real-time, the client application 110 and OSP server 130 preferably also records and stores user information for the sponsor whenever the user clicks on an advertisement. The sponsor can then use the information to modify or enhance the electronic presentations. The
10 client application 110 preferably creates a record, referred to as a Click-Through record, whenever a user clicks through on an advertisement in the client window 200. The Click-Through record preferably comprises a file that includes information related to the user and to the click-through of the advertisement, as described more fully below.

Figure 7 shows a flow chart that describes a process for recording user data for a
15 sponsor when a user clicks-through on the sponsor's advertisement. The process begins when the user activates the client application 110 (step 705). The client application 110 then commences an online session.

In step 715, the client application 110 displays one or more advertisements in the client window 200 on the display 101 of the local device 110. The advertisements are
20 preferably displayed in accordance with a play list, as described above with respect to

Figure 5. However, the client application 110 may also display advertisements in the client window 200 apart from the play list, or in a second client window 200.

The client application 110 preferably monitors the user's actions with respect to the local device 100 in order to keep track of when the user performs a click-through on a sponsored advertisement in the client window 200 (step 720). A "click-through" of a sponsored advertisement is defined as the user clicking on or otherwise selecting a sponsored advertisement using a computer input device, such as the pointer 103 and/or the keyboard 102. If the user does not click-through on any sponsored advertisement, then the client application continues to display sponsored advertisements in the client window 200 on the display 101 (step 715). If the user does click-through on a sponsored advertisement, then the client application 110 causes one or more resource locator associated with the sponsored advertisement to be accessed (step 725).

After the user clicks through on an advertisement, the client application 110 creates a Click-Through record by first copying the data in the user's User Record into a new file. The click-through record therefore includes all available data associated with the user that performed the click-through on the advertisement. The client application 110 preferably also includes in the Click-Through record various informational aspects with respect to the user's click-through of the sponsored advertisement, including for example, one or more of the following data fields:

1. Time – the time of day at which the user clicked-through on the advertisement;

2. Date – the date on which the user clicked-through on the advertisement;
3. Geographic location of the user when the click-through was performed;
4. Advertisement identifier code that identifies the advertisement on which the user performed the clicked-through;
5. Sponsor identifier code that identifies the sponsor associated with the advertisement.

After the Click-Through record is created, the client application 110 transmits the Click-Through record over the communication channel to the OSP server 130 (step 735). The OSP server 130 then stores the Click-Through record in one or more of the data stores 140 (step 740). Preferably, the OSP server 130 records the time that the Click-Through record is stored in the data stores 140 and writes this information into the Click-Through record. The Click-Through record is preferably stored in a location that is accessible by the sponsor so that the sponsor can view and analyze the data associated with click-throughs on its advertisements. The process is then complete.

In a preferred method, the OSP server 130 periodically sorts the data in the stored Click-Through records and assembles the data into a format that is usable and accessible by the sponsor or sponsors associated with the stored Click-Through records. Figure 7 shows a flow chart that describes a process in which the OSP server 130 sorts through and organizes the advertisement click-through data. The OSP server 130 preferably automatically initiates the process on a periodic basis for each advertisement,

such as on a nightly basis. Preferably, advertisement sponsors may also manually initiate the process, such as through an Internet web site. Once the process is initiated, the OSP server 130 sorts through and assembles the click-through data based upon one or more sorting parameters. For example, the OSP server 130 may sort through and assemble all Click-Through data associated with a particular advertisement or a particular sponsor, or all Click-Through records in which the click-through occurred within a give time or date span.

In step 805, the OSP server 130 or the sponsor selects one or more criteria for sorting through the Click-Through records. The available sorting criteria correspond to the data fields in the Click-Through records. The OSP server 130 preferably uses the advertisement identifier code data field as a default criterion. That is, in a default mode the OSP server 130 preferably sorts through and identifies all Click-Through records associated with a given advertisement identifier. Preferably, an advertisement sponsor can manually select alternate sorting criterion corresponding to any of the data fields in the click-through records. For example, the sponsor may specify a given sponsor identifier code as the sorting criterion so that the OSP server 130 sorts through and identifies all click-through data associated with a given sponsor. The OSP server 130 preferably utilizes security measures to ensure that a given sponsor has privileges to only sort through data associated with that sponsor's advertisements.

The OSP server 130 next searches all Click-Through records in the data store 140 (step 810), particularly with respect to the data fields corresponding to the selected sorting criteria. The OSP server 130 then identifies all Click-Through records where the

entry in the relevant data field matches the sorting criteria (step 815). For example, in the default mode, the OSP server 130 identifies all Click-Through records where the advertisement identifier code entry matches the advertisement identifier code currently being used as a sorting criteria. In this manner, the OSP server 130 identifies all Click-Through records associated with a given advertisement (step 820). Preferably, in a default mode, the OSP server 130 limits the search to click-throughs that occurred within the last thirty days of the search in order to minimize loads on the OSP server 130. The time window of the search maybe expanded if desired.

After the OSP server 130 identifies the Click-Through records that match the relevant selected criteria, the OSP server 130 then analyzes the data in the identified Click-Through records (step 825). This step preferably comprises the OSP server 130 performing a statistical analysis of the data. In a default mode, the OSP server 130 preferably: (1) calculates the quantity of click-throughs that occurred on the advertisement within a given time period (preferably, within the last thirty days); and (2) for each demographic category, calculates the quantity of users associated with a given demographic category entry that have clicked on the advertisement within the given time period. For example, the OSP server 130 calculates the number of users located within the same geographic region that clicked through on the given advertisement in the last thirty days. The OSP server 130 may readily perform these calculations using the data contained in the identified Click-Through records.

The OSP server 130 preferably also uses well-known statistical analysis algorithms to identify any trends in click-through frequency for the advertisement within

a given time period for any of the demographic categories. The OSP server 130 may perform various other types of statistical analyses on the data in order to provide sponsor with a thorough statistical picture of the performance of an advertisement with respect to the sorting criteria. The statistical analyses are preferably aimed at providing
5 a picture of the type of users that have clicked through on the given advertisement within a given time period.

In step 830, the OSP server 130 creates a Summary Record comprising a file that contains the results of the aforementioned data identification and data analysis. In one embodiment, the Summary Record does not include any statistical analysis, but merely
10 comprises a file that includes a collection of each of the relevant Click-Through records that were identified in step 825. In such a case, the sponsor is responsible for analyzing the data and performing any statistical analysis of the data in the Click-Through records. In another embodiment, the summary record includes the results of the statistical analysis performed in step 825, including objects associated with text and graphical
15 displays, such as tables and graphs, to assist the sponsor in analyzing the data.

The Summary Record is then provided to the sponsor for review (step 835). In one embodiment, the OSP server causes a printer to print the information contained in the summary record. The OSP server 130 automatically forwards the resulting print-out hard copy to the relevant sponsor. In another embodiment, the OSP server 130 provides
20 the Summary Record in electronic format for display to the sponsor through an electronic medium, such as through an Internet web page or via email. The OSP server 130 may also write the Summary Record to a data store 140 and thereafter provide the

sponsor with access privileges to the Summary Record. The aforementioned process preferably provides the sponsor with a statistical picture related to the users that have performed click-throughs on any of the sponsor's advertisements.

Although exemplary embodiments of the present invention have been shown and
5 described, it will be apparent to those having ordinary skill in the art that a number of changes, modifications, or alterations to the invention as described herein may be made, none of which depart from the spirit of the present invention. All such changes, modifications and alterations should therefore be seen as within the scope of the present invention.

CLAIMS

It is claimed:

- 1 1. A method of providing an advertisement-related electronic presentation to a user of
2 an online service, the user using a client application on a local device to access an online
3 server associated with the online service, wherein the online service displays an
4 advertisement to the user on behalf of a sponsor, the method comprising:

5 the online server obtaining personal profile information from the user;

6 the client application causing an advertisement to be displayed on the local
7 device;

8 the user performing a click-through on the advertisement;

9 the client application transmitting a notification signal to the online server
10 notifying the online server that the user clicked on the advertisement;

11 the online server using the personal profile information to identify one or more
12 resource locators according to a selection protocol associated with the
13 advertisement;

14 the online server transmitting a signal to the client application identifying the
15 one or more resource locators;

16 the client application causing the local device to access one or more resources

17 associated with the one or more resource locators.

1 2. The method of providing an advertisement-related electronic presentation to a user
2 of an online service of claim 1 wherein the advertisement is displayed in a client
3 window displayed by the client application.

1 3. The method of providing an advertisement-related electronic presentation to a user
2 of an online service of claim 1, wherein at least one of the resource locators is a uniform
3 resource locator specifying the address of an Internet web page.

1 4. A method of providing a sponsor access to data related to an advertisement that is
2 displayed to a user of an online service administered by an online service provider, the
3 user using a client application on a local device to access an online server associated
4 with the online service, the local device including an input device and an output device,
5 wherein the online service display the advertisement to the user on behalf of a sponsor,
6 the method comprising:

7 the client application activating;

8 the client application causing the advertisement to be displayed on the output
9 device;

10 the user performing a click-through on the advertisement;

11 the client application creating a data set, the data set including an identifier code

12 associated with the advertisement and further including information
13 descriptive of the user;
14 the client application transmitting the data set to the online server via a
15 communication channel from the local device to the online server;
16 the online server storing the data set in a format that is accessible by the sponsor.

1 5. The method of providing a sponsor access to data related to an advertisement of
2 claim 4, wherein the advertisement is displayed in client window displayed by the client
3 application.

1 6. The method of providing a sponsor access to data related to an advertisement of
2 claim 4, wherein the communication channel from the local device to the online server
3 comprises a public switched telephone connection.

1 7. The method of providing a sponsor access to data related to an advertisement of
2 claim 4, wherein the communication channel from the local device to the online server
3 comprises a digital subscriber line.

1 8. The method of providing a sponsor access to data related to an advertisement of
2 claim 4, wherein the communication channel from the local device to the online server
3 includes a wireless communications link.

1 9. The method of providing a sponsor access to data related to an advertisement of
2 claim 4, wherein the data set includes information related to the user comprises at least
3 one of the user's: name, street address, city, state, education level, income level, gender,
4 age, and marriage status.

1 10. The method of providing a sponsor access to data related to an advertisement of
2 claim 4, wherein the online server storing the data set in a format that is accessible by
3 the sponsor comprises the online server electronically storing the data set in a data store,
4 wherein the sponsor has access-privileges to the data store.

1 11. The method of providing a sponsor access to data related to an advertisement of
2 claim 4, wherein the online server storing the data set in a format that is accessible by
3 the sponsor comprises the online server causing a printer to print the information on a
4 print-out and thereafter providing the print-out to the sponsor.

1 12. A method of passing user-related information to a sponsor of an advertisement,
2 wherein a user uses a client application loaded on a local device to access and interact
3 with an online service, the user-related information being contained in a user
4 information record stored in a data store, the method comprising:

5 the client application activating;

6 the client application displaying an advertisement on the output device of the

7 local device on behalf of an advertisement sponsor;

8 the user performing a click-through on the advertisement;

9 the client application transmitting a least a portion of the user-related
10 information contained in the user information record to the online server
11 via a communication channel from the local device to the online server;

12 the online server copying the user-related information into a data record stored in
13 a data store, the data record including an identifier associated with the
14 advertisement;

15 the online server providing the sponsor with access to the information contained
16 in the data record.

1 13. The method of passing user-related information to a sponsor of claim 12, wherein
2 the online server provides the sponsor access to the information in the data record by
3 causing a printer to print the information on a print-out and forwarding the print-out to
4 the sponsor.

1 14. The method of passing user-related information to a sponsor of claim 12, wherein
2 the online server provides the sponsor access to the information in the data record by
3 emailing the data record to the sponsor.

1 15. The method of passing user-related information to a sponsor of claim 12,

2 additionally comprising:

3 a) the client application prompting the user to provide the user-related
4 information, wherein the user related information comprises at least one of
5 the user's name, street address, city, telephone number, occupation, age,
6 marriage status, and gender;

7 b) the client application copying the user-related information into the user
8 information file and storing the user-related information in a data store.

1 16. The method of passing user-related information to a sponsor of claim 12, wherein
2 the online server provides the sponsor with access to the information contained in the
3 data record via an Internet web page.

1 17. The method of passing user-related information to a sponsor of claim 12, wherein
2 the communication channel from the local device to the online server comprises a
3 constant-connection communication channel.

1 18. A method of assembling data related to a user's interaction with advertisements, the
2 user accessing an online service via a local device and a client application, the local
3 device including an input device and an output device, the method comprising:

4 the user providing the client application with data descriptive of the user,
5 wherein the data includes the user's name, address, occupation, marriage

6 status, and age;

7 the client application storing the user-descriptive data in a first data set;

8 the client application causing an advertisement to be displayed on the output

9 device;

10 the user using the input device to perform a click-through on the advertisement;

11 the client application transmitting the user-descriptive data to an online server

12 associated with the online service via a communication channel linking the

13 local device to the online server;

14 the online server storing the user-descriptive data in a second data set, wherein

15 the second data set includes an advertisement identifier code that identifies

16 the advertisement on which the user performed a click-through.

1 19. The method of assembling data related of claim 18, wherein the advertisement is

2 displayed in a client window displayed by the client application.

1 20. The method of assembling data related of claim 18, further comprising the online

2 service provider provides the sponsor with the information contained within the second

3 data set.

1 21. The method of assembling data related of claim 19, wherein the online service

2 provider provides the sponsor with the information contained within the second data set

3 via an electronic medium.

1 22. The method of assembling data related of claim 18, additionally comprising the
2 client application establishing the communication channel from the local device to the
3 online server via a public switched telephone network.

1 23. The method of assembling data related of claim 18, wherein the communication
2 channel linking the local device to the online server comprises a wireless connection.

1 24. A method of passing user-specific information to a first server on a data network,
2 the method comprising:

3 a user using the local device to establish a connection to the data network;

4 a client application storing user-specific information in the local device;

5 displaying a first display on the local device, wherein the first display includes a
6 hyperlink to a generic resource on the first server;

7 the user activating the hyperlink;

8 the client application forming a message requesting the generic resource,
9 wherein the message includes at least some of the user-specific
10 information;

11 the client application sending the message to the first server on the data network.

1 25. The method of passing user-specific information of claim 24 wherein the message
2 comprises a URL.

1 26. The method of passing user-specific information of claim 24 further comprising:

2 storing the user-specific information in a user information data store of a second
3 server on the data network, and

4 the local device receiving the user-related information from the second server.

1 27. The method of passing user-specific information of claim 24 further comprising:

2 the first server using the request for the generic resource and at least some of the
3 user-specific information in the message to form a specific resource;

4 the first server sending the specific resource to the local device; and

5 the local device providing a second display of the specific resource.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

In accordance with the present invention, there is provided a client application for enabling access to an online service and displaying advertisements while the user is accessing the online service. The client application receives play lists from the online service provider. The play lists include information about advertisements to be played and the order of play. The client application displays advertisements continuously within a dedicated client window while the user is connected to and / or using the online service. The client application preferably records informational data related to the user. When the user clicks-on an advertisement, the client application and an online server forward the user's informational data to the advertisement's sponsor. The sponsor uses the information to provide the user with customized information related to the advertisement.

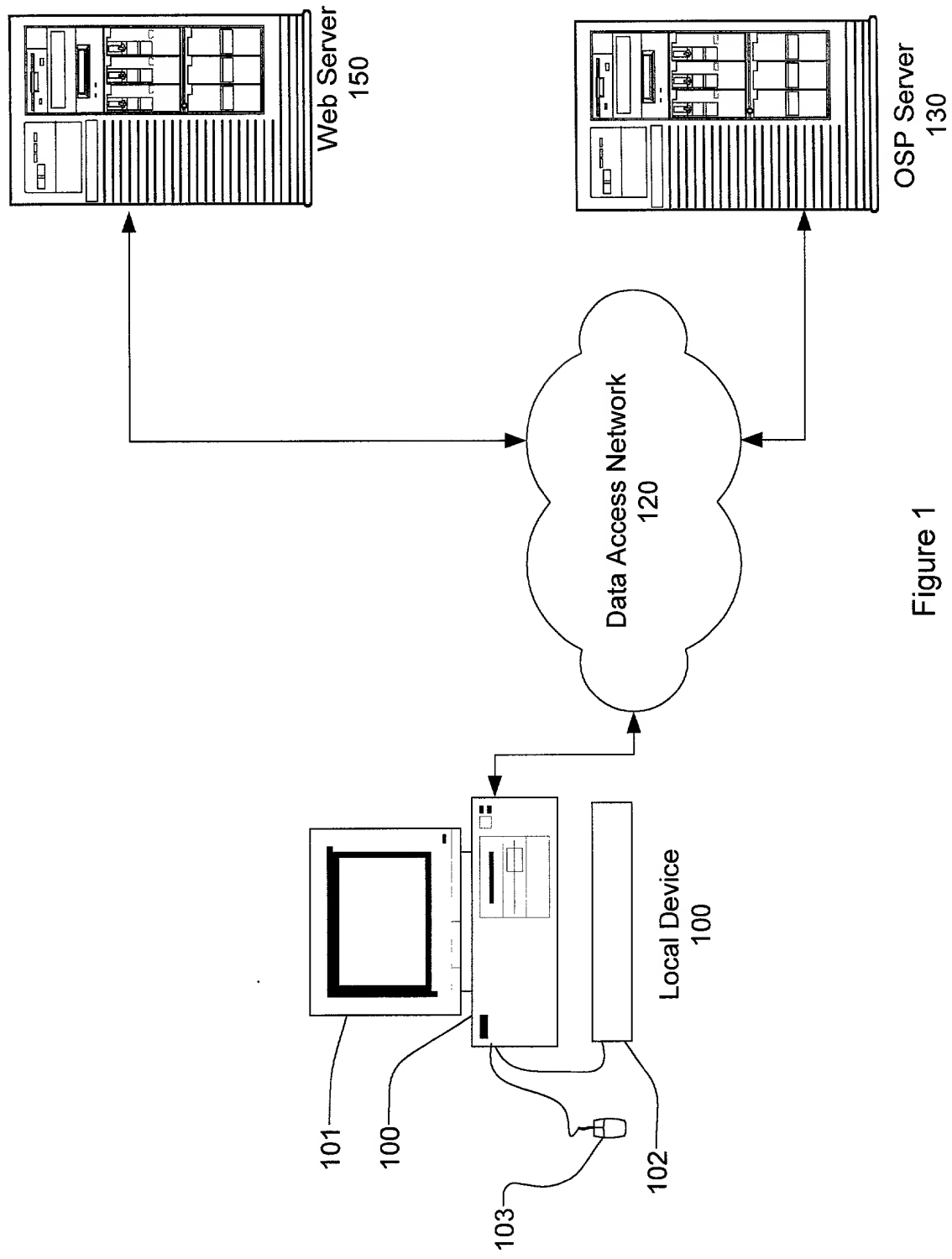


Figure 1

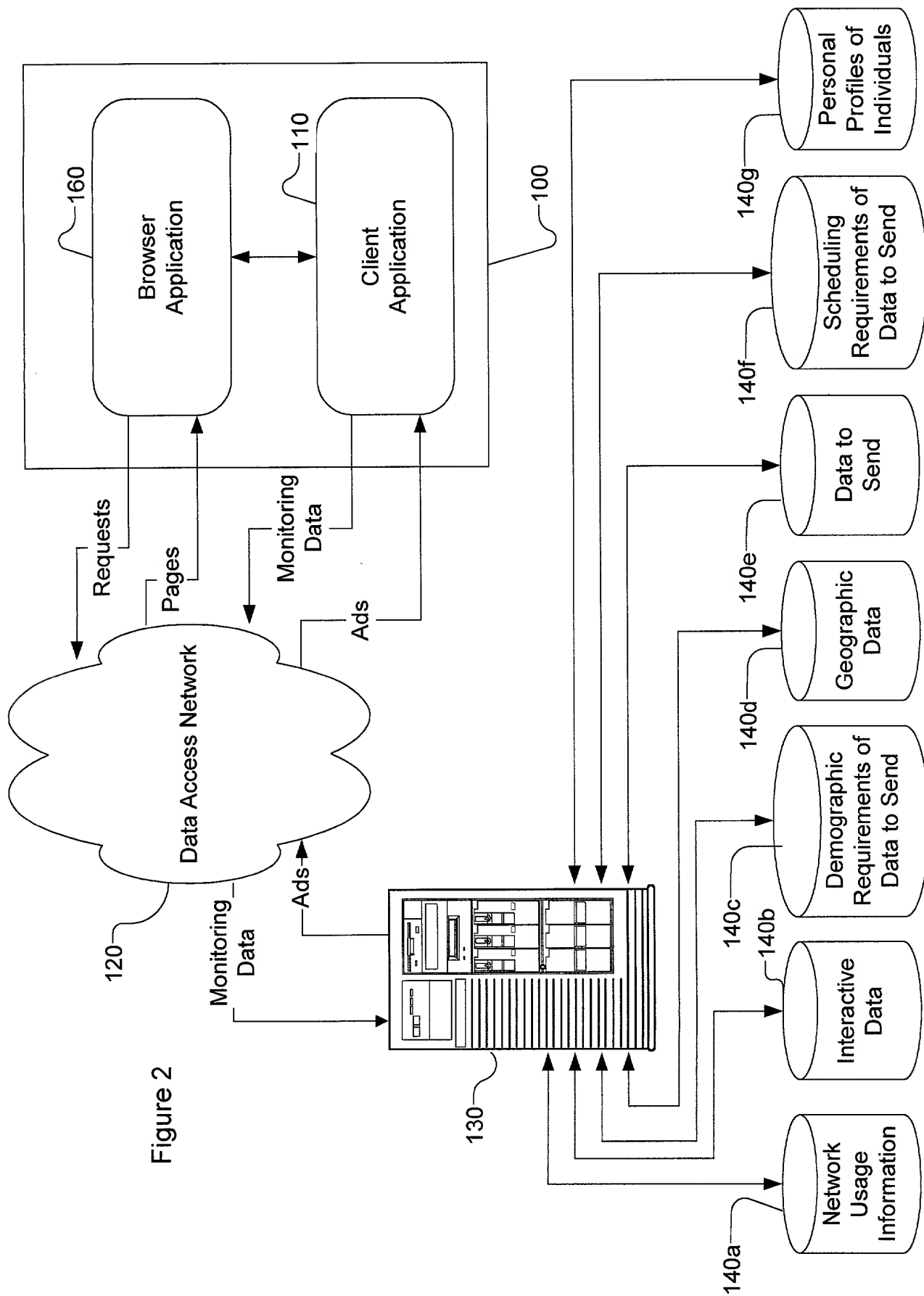


Figure 2

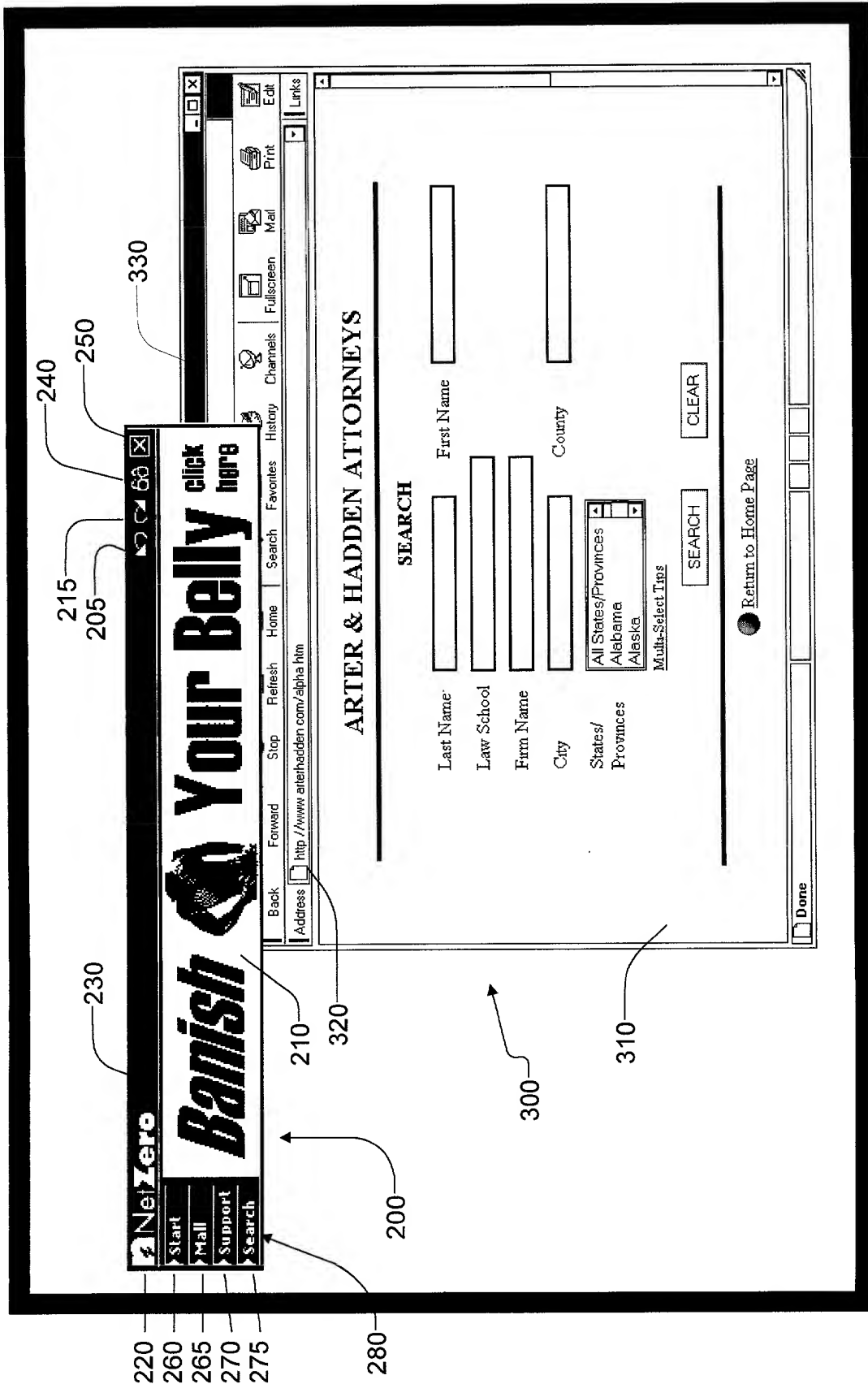


Figure 3

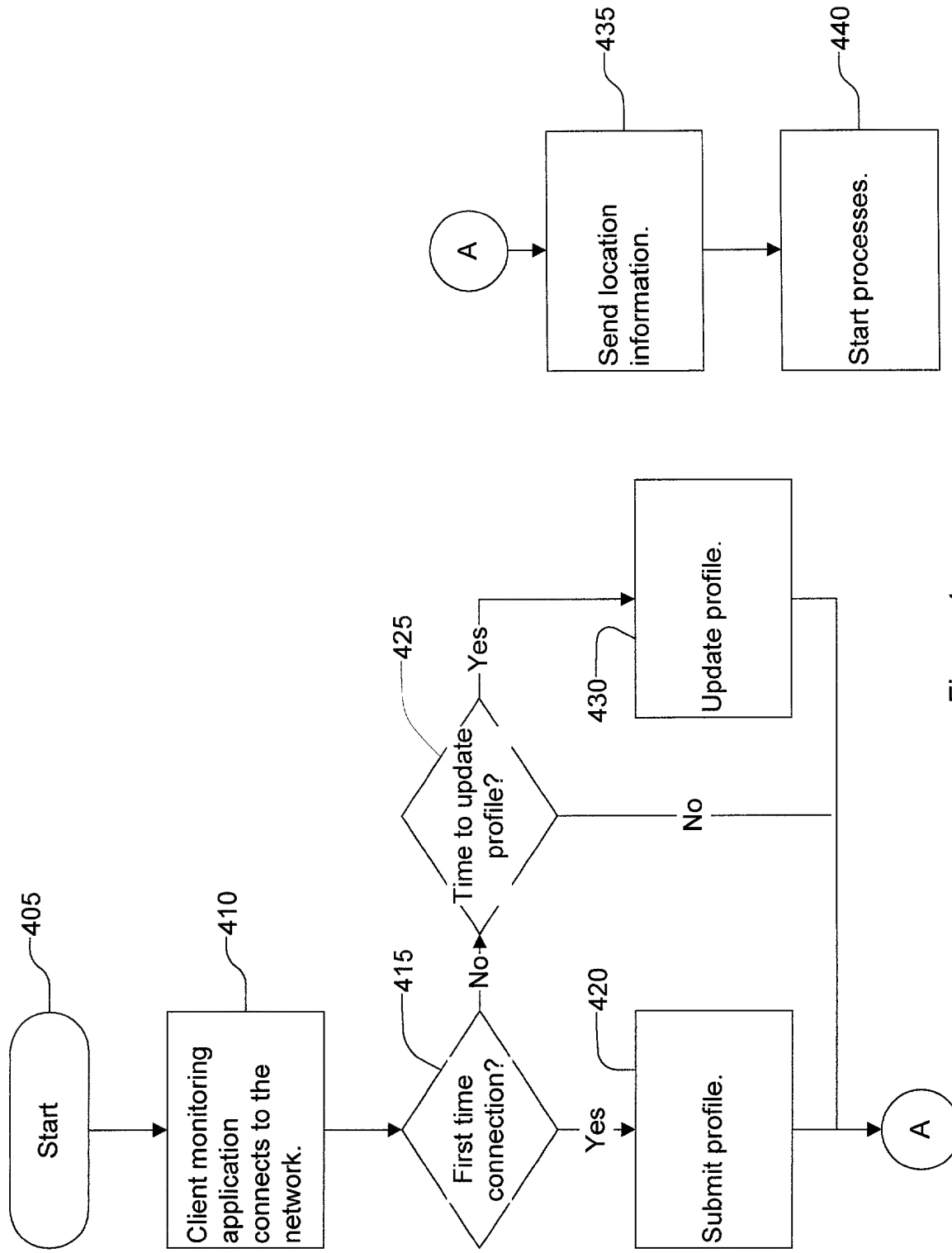


Figure 4

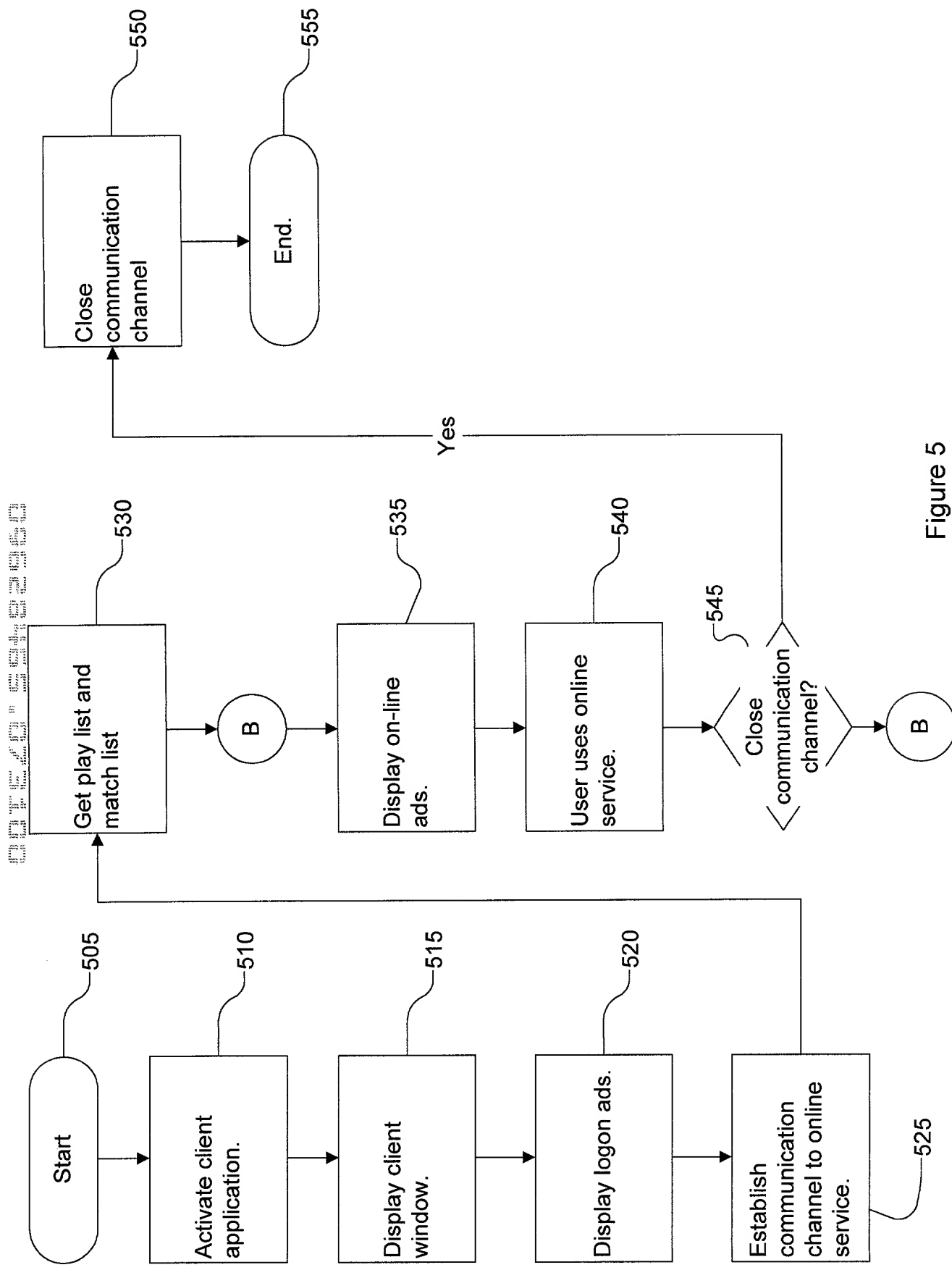


Figure 5

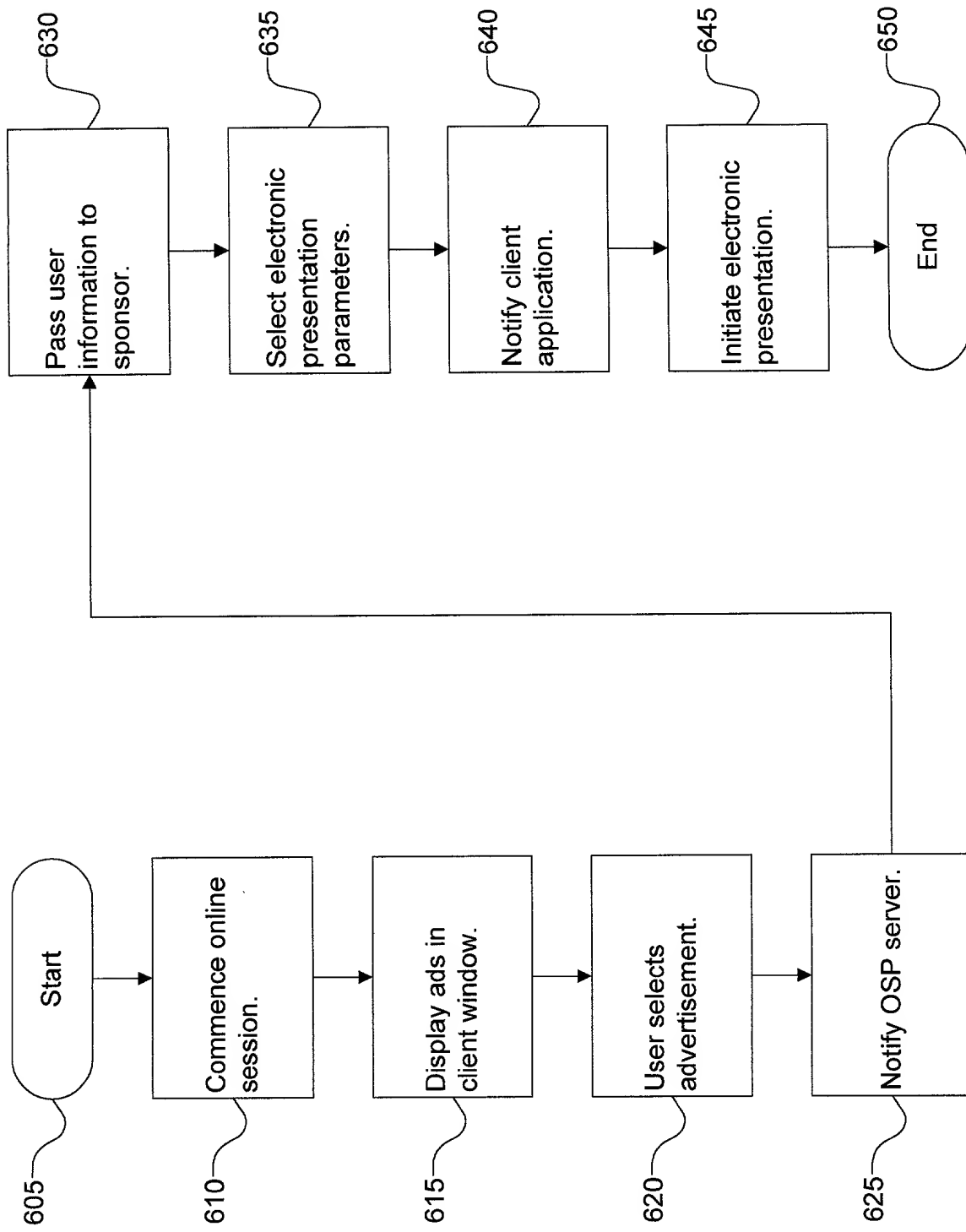


Figure 6

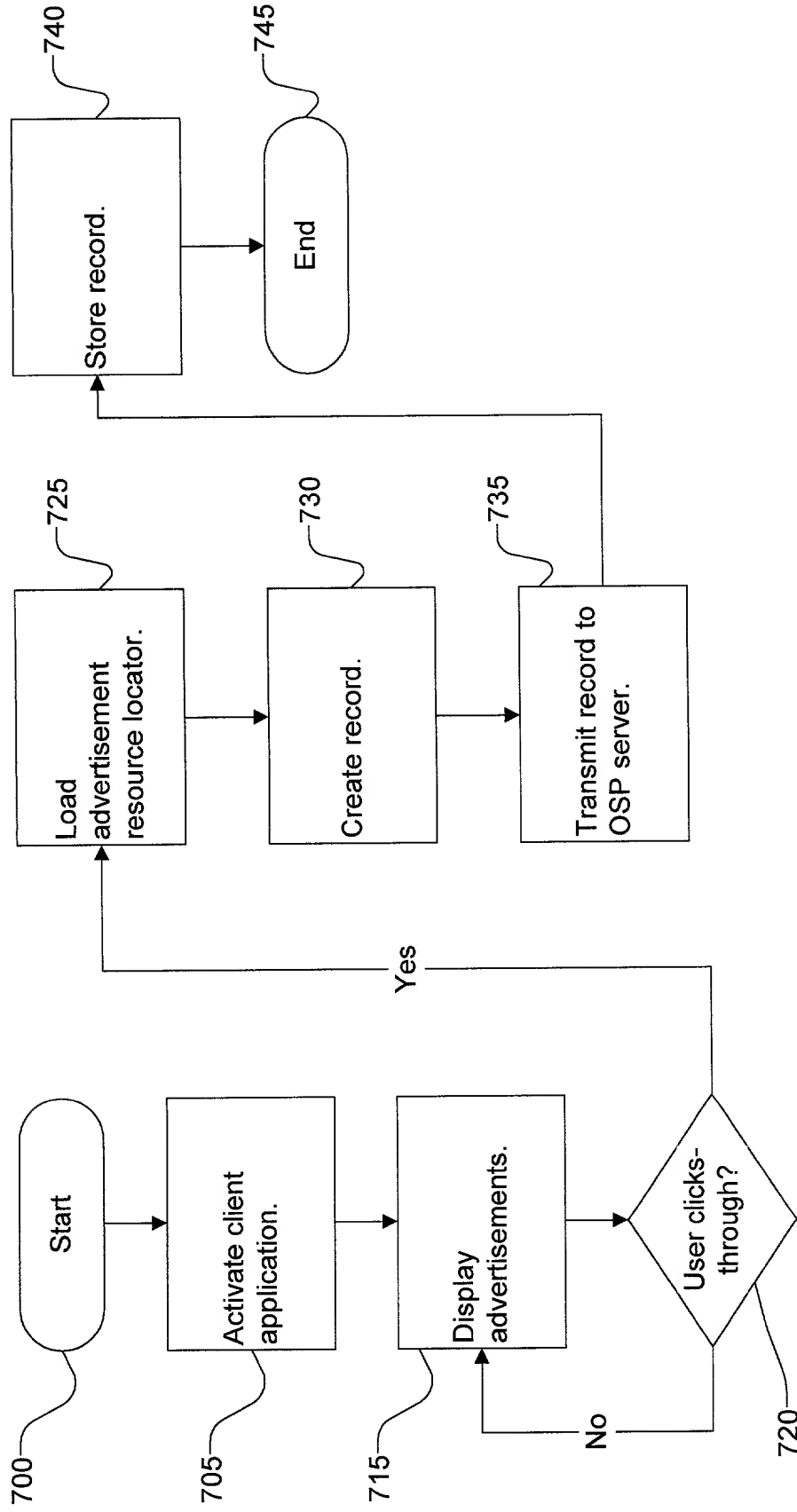


Figure 7

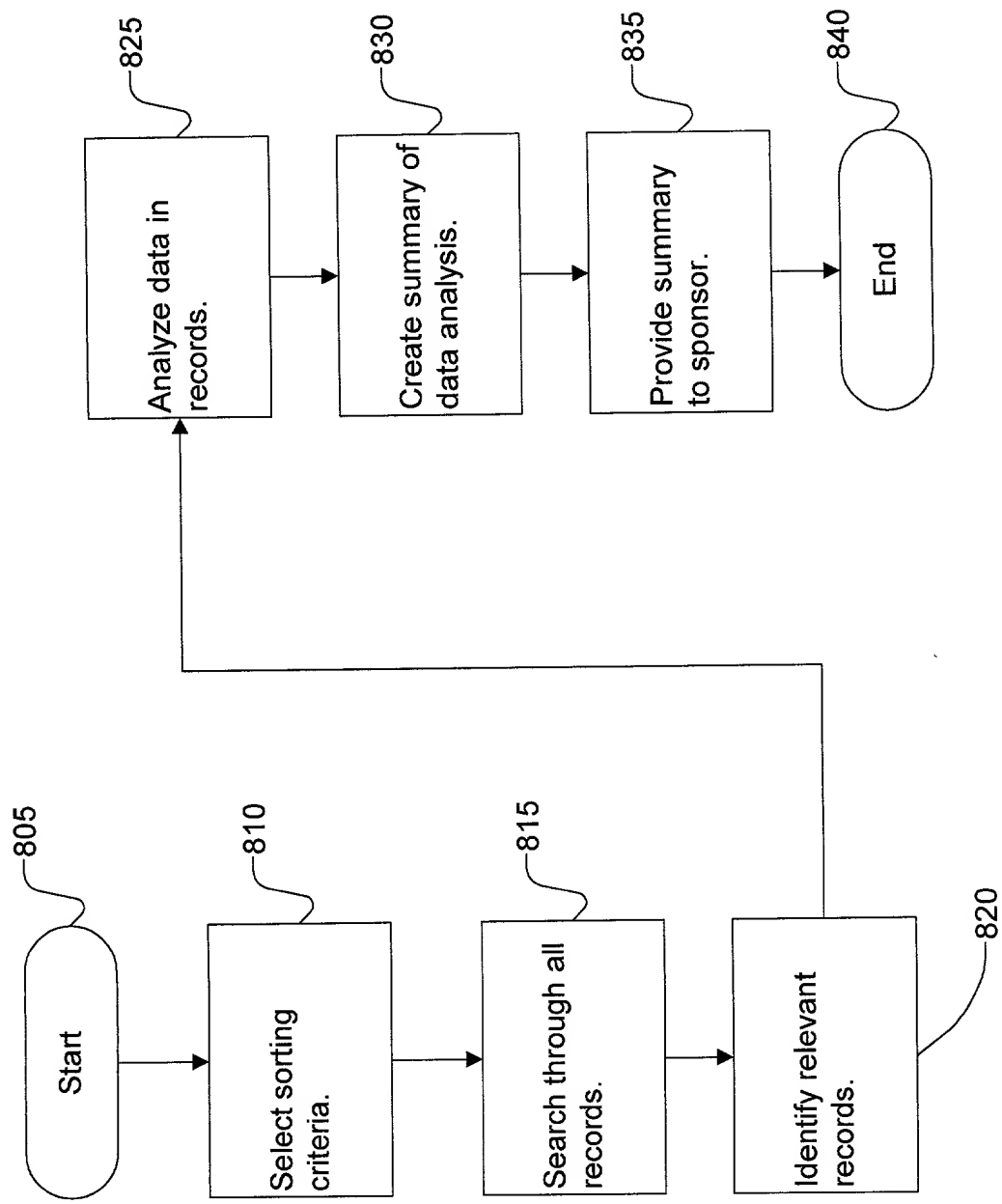


Figure 8

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DECLARATION FOR UTILITY OR DESIGN PATENT APPLICATION (37 CFR 1.63)	Attorney Docket Number 72189/98120B	
	First Named Inventor HAITSUKA, Stacy	
	COMPLETE IF KNOWN	
	Application Number	/
	Filing Date	
	Group Art Unit	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Declaration Submitted with Initial Filing	OR	<input type="checkbox"/> Declaration Submitted after Initial Filing (surcharge (37 CFR 1.16 (e)) required)
		Examiner Name

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address, and citizenship are as stated below next to my name.

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled:

DATA PASS-THROUGH TO SPONSORS

the specification of which (Title of the Invention)

☒ is attached hereto
OR
☐ was filed on (MM/DD/YYYY) as United States Application Number or PCT International Application Number and was amended on (MM/DD/YYYY) (if applicable).

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment specifically referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in 37 CFR 1.56.

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under 35 U.S.C. 119(a)-(d) or 365(b) of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate, or 365(a) of any PCT international application which designated at least one country other than the United States of America, listed below and have also identified below, by checking the box, any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate, or of any PCT international application having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed.

Prior Foreign Application Number(s)	Country	Foreign Filing Date (MM/DD/YYYY)	Priority Not Claimed	Certified Copy Attached?	
				YES	NO
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

☐ Additional foreign application numbers are listed on a supplemental priority data sheet PTO/SB/02B attached hereto:

I hereby claim the benefit under 35 U.S.C. 119(e) of any United States provisional application(s) listed below.

Application Number(s)	Filing Date (MM/DD/YYYY)	<input type="checkbox"/> Additional provisional application numbers are listed on a supplemental priority data sheet PTO/SB/02B attached hereto.
60/160,422	10/19/1999	

[Page 1 of 2]

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I hereby claim the benefit under 35 U.S.C. 120 of any United States application(s), or 365(c) of any PCT international application designating the United States of America, listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States or PCT International application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in 37 CFR 1.56 which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT international filing date of this application.

U.S. Parent Application or PCT Parent Number	Parent Filing Date (MM/DD/YYYY)	Parent Patent Number (if applicable)
60/160,422	10/19/1999	

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As a named inventor, I hereby appoint the following registered practitioner(s) to prosecute this application and to transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith:

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Steven C. Sereboff	37.035	David Alexander	28,176
Nguyen Nguyen	43.834	Lawrence M. Sung	38,330
Breton A. Bocchieri	31.739		

☐ Additional registered practitioner(s) named on supplemental Registered Practitioner Information sheet PTO/SB/02C attached hereto.

Direct all correspondence to: ☐ Customer Number or Bar Code Label

OR ☒ Correspondence address below

Name	Steven C. Sereboff				
Address	Arter & Hadden LLP				
Address	Five Park Plaza, Suite 1000				
City	Irvine	State	CA	ZIP	92614-8528
Country	USA	Telephone	(949) 252-7500	Fax	(949) 833-9604

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under 18 U.S.C. 1001 and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

Name of Sole or First Inventor:

☐ A petition has been filed for this unsigned inventor

Given Name (first and middle [if any])		Family Name or Surname					
Stacy		Haitsuka					
Inventor's Signature				Date	7-27-00		
Residence: City	5412 Park Los Angeles	State	CA	Country	USA	Citizenship	USA
Post Office Address	2555 Townsgate Road						
Post Office Address							
City	Westlake Village	State	CA	ZIP	91361	Country	USA

☒ Additional inventors are being named on the 1 supplemental Additional Inventor(s) sheet(s) PTO/SB/02A attached hereto

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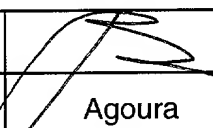
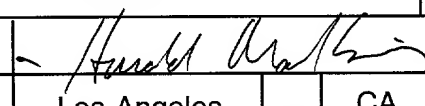
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Given Name (first and middle [if any])				Family Name or Surname			
Ronald				Burr			
Inventor's Signature				Date	7-27-00		
Residence: City	Agoura	State	CA	Country	USA	Citizenship	USA
Post Office Address	2555 Townsgate Road						
Post Office Address							
City	Westlake Village	State	CA	ZIP	91361	Country	USA
Name of Additional Joint Inventor, if any:				<input type="checkbox"/> A petition has been filed for this unsigned inventor			
Given Name (first and middle [if any])				Family Name or Surname			
Harold				MacKenzie			
Inventor's Signature				Date	7-27-00		
Residence: City	Los Angeles	State	CA	Country	USA	Citizenship	USA
Post Office Address	2555 Townsgate Road						
Post Office Address							
City	Westlake Village	State	CA	ZIP	91361	Country	USA
Name of Additional Joint Inventor, if any:				<input type="checkbox"/> A petition has been filed for this unsigned inventor			
Given Name (first and middle [if any])				Family Name or Surname			
Marwan				Zebian			
Inventor's Signature				Date			
Residence: City	Agoura	State	CA	Country	USA	Citizenship	
Post Office Address	2555 Townsgate Road						
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Given Name (first and middle [if any])				Family Name or Surname			
Terry				Warren			
Inventor's Signature	<i>Terry Warren</i>			Date	7-27-00		
Residence: City	Santa Ana	State	CA	Country	USA	Citizenship	USA
Post Office Address	2555 Townsgate Road						
Post Office Address							
City	Westlake Village	State	CA	ZIP	91361	Country	USA
Name of Additional Joint Inventor, if any:				<input type="checkbox"/> A petition has been filed for this unsigned inventor			
Given Name (first and middle [if any])				Family Name or Surname			
Shane				Blaser			
Inventor's Signature	<i>Shane Blaser</i>			Date	7-27-00		
Residence: City	Camarillo	State	CA	Country	USA	Citizenship	USA
Post Office Address	2555 Townsgate Road						
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City	Westlake Village	State	CA	ZIP	91361	Country	USA
Name of Additional Joint Inventor, if any:				<input type="checkbox"/> A petition has been filed for this unsigned inventor			
Given Name (first and middle [if any])				Family Name or Surname			
Colin				Giffen			
Inventor's Signature	<i>Colin Giffen</i>			Date	7-27-00		
Residence: City	Westlake Village	State	CA	Country	USA	Citizenship	USA
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STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP

Applicant: Stacy Haitzuka, Marwan Zebian, Harold MacKenzie, Ronald Burr, Terry Warren, Shane Blaser, Colin Giffen

Application No.: [] Filed: []

Entitled: DATA PASS-THROUGH TO SPONSORS

NetZero, Inc., a Delaware corporation,
(Name of Assignee), (Type of Assignee, e.g., corporation, partnership, university, government agency, etc.)

is the assignee of the entire right, title and interest in the patent application identified above by virtue of:

☒ An assignment from the inventor(s) of the patent application identified above.

☐ Copies of assignments or other documents in the chain of title are attached.

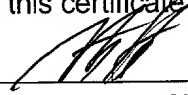
The authority and rights of the inventor(s) with respect to this application are hereby excluded in accordance with the provisions of 37 CFR 1.32.

The following attorneys are hereby appointed to prosecute this application and transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith: STEVEN C. SEREBOFF, Reg. No. 37,035 of Arter & Hadden LLP, Five Park Plaza, Suite 1000, Irvine, California 92614-8528; BRETON A. BOCCHIERI, Reg. No. 31,739; DAVID ALEXANDER, Reg. No. 28,176; LAWRENCE M. SUNG, Reg. No. 38,330; NGUYEN NGUYEN, Reg. No. 43,834 and every member with the firm of Arter & Hadden LLP and every attorney at law associated with said firm is hereby authorized to sign any paper or conduct any business on its behalf.

I further declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that there statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of this application and any patent issuing thereon.

The undersigned is empowered to sign this certificate on behalf of the assignee.

7-27-00
Date


Signature
Stacy Haitzuka
Typed or printed name
Sr. VP Technology
Title